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April 23, 2013

Flooding Aftermath - Drying Out Homes Quickly Prevents Future Mold Problems.

GRAND RAPIDS – With floodwaters receding in many communities, the Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan is encouraging homeowners to prevent future mold problems by drying out their homes as quickly as possible.

“Floods like those experienced in Kent County this past week are a tragedy, and we recognize the inconvenience that has been caused for local residents. Now that flood waters are receding, the long, stressful work of drying out begins,” said Paul Haan, Healthy Homes Coalition Executive Director. “What we do for flood damaged homes in the next day or two can make all the difference when it comes to avoiding mold in the aftermath.”

The Healthy Homes Coalition offers these tips for avoiding future mold growth:

1. Ideally, the home should be dried out in 24-48 hours.
2. Porous items such as clothing, upholstered furniture and other belongings can hold a lot of moisture and promote mold growth. These items need to be dried quickly, including removing them from the flood damaged home. If these items cannot be dried out in 24-48 hours, disposal is recommended. Healthy Homes recognizes how difficult it can be to have to part with sentimental items, yet disposal is recommended over the promotion of mold growth.
3. Humidity in the air can promote rampant mold growth. Fans, ventilation and dehumidifiers should be used to bring the ambient humidity of the home down below 50%. This will also help curb the growth of dust mites, another pernicious allergen associated with dampness.
4. Ceilings, floors and walls may need to be opened up to promote drying. Porous building materials that have gotten wet (drywall, carpeting, compressed wood products, ceiling tiles and the like) should be removed and disposed.

“As stressful as things are at the moment, what we do now can save a lot of troubles down the road. Damp and moldy homes are unhealthy places to live, and the prevention at this time is drying things out quickly and not waiting until the weekend,” said Haan.

The Healthy Homes Coalition recommends these helpful links:

EPA Floods & Mold Fact Sheet: <http://www.epa.gov/iedmold1/pdfs/floods.pdf>

EPA In-Depth Guide to Flood Clean-up: http://www.epa.gov/iaq/flood/flood_booklet_en.pdf

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